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Letter dated 3 February 2010 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of the Istanbul Statement adopted on 26 January 2010 at the end of the Regional Summit on Afghanistan, which was held on 26 January 2010 in Istanbul (see annex).

I would be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 17, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Ertuğrul **Apakan**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 3 February 2010 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Istanbul Statement: Friendship and Cooperation in the "Heart of Asia"

We the President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the President of the Republic of Turkey, the First Vice President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Special Representative of the President and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan have met in Istanbul on 26 January 2010 upon the invitation of the Republic of Turkey and agreed on the following statement.

The Foreign Secretary of the United Kingdom, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan, the Minister of State in charge of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Minister of State of the United Arab Emirates, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, the Secretary General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization, the Executive Director of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia, the senior representatives of the United States of America, France, Italy, Germany, Japan, the United Nations, the European Union, and NATO joined them at their meeting in Istanbul as observers.

The shared vision

Forming the very heart of Asia, Afghanistan is a country whose present and future is inseparably bound with those of its neighbourhood.

The vital element of regional peace and stability is a safe, secure, stable and prosperous Afghanistan, which in turn can be ensured within a regional framework that reflects friendship and cooperation.

Afghanistan and the neighbouring countries have been moulded by intensive mutual exchanges and interactions throughout history. Our cultures, populations and languages are profoundly intertwined. Rich human potential, cultural depth and promising economic potential are shared by us all. Similarly, several of the risks and challenges we face are also shared. Threats such as all forms of terrorism, extremism and all aspects related to illicit narcotic drugs are interlinked and affect all of our countries.

The success of one regional country in standing up against challenges positively reverberates in neighbouring countries, while shortcomings also afflict the neighbours. We are convinced that our region as a whole should take determined and coordinated action to address the complex challenges that characterise the contemporary regional environment.

This is equally true for the economic potential of our countries and for the attainment of a prosperous future for our countries. Enhanced and effective regional cooperation in key fields such as trade and transit, transport and energy would exponentially benefit not only Afghanistan but indeed all of our countries and peoples.

Regional cooperation starts from the region. It has great potential. It is effective when it is regionally owned, steered and governed in a sincere, transparent and constructive manner, bringing positive synergy.

In the region that surrounds Afghanistan we aim to weave a rich, positive, and progressive mosaic of initiatives and efforts that each shoulders a part of the common task to ensure peace, stability and prosperity.

The bonds between us constitute a strong basis to establish a consensus underwriting a code of conduct that is based on fundamental principles of good neighbourly relations.

Our solidarity today with Afghanistan will be a facilitator and a test for the irrevocable establishment of timeless friendship and cooperation in our region.

Principles of cooperation

In order to fulfil the foregoing vision for the region that finds Afghanistan at its core we:

Note that the invitation for this Summit was issued by Turkey which acted on the Joint Statement Adopted at the Conclusion of the Third Trilateral Summit on 1 April 2009 among Afghanistan, Pakistan and Turkey which stated that the "Presidents of Afghanistan and Pakistan requested the Turkish President to organize in Turkey a regional summit that would underline their political will to enhance cooperation on regional issues";

Reaffirm our strong commitment to the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of Afghanistan and of each other;

Reiterate our commitment to continued support for the Government and people of Afghanistan as they develop their country, reconstruct their economy, and further improve their human capital;

Support the ongoing efforts of the Afghan Government and the international community to address its development needs;

Support the program that is set out by the President of Afghanistan with his inaugural speech on 19 November 2009;

Support, therefore, the Afghan national process of reconciliation and reintegration in accordance with the constitution of Afghanistan in a way that is Afghan-led and -driven;

Recognize the interconnected nature of the challenges Afghanistan is facing and the fact that no neighbouring country is immune from them;

Recall the Trilateral Declaration on Good Neighbourly Relations of 2007, as well as the objectives and principles contained therein, including the shared determination to defeat terrorism, extremism and narco-trafficking, common desire for peace and stability in the region, and the commitment to constructive and supportive bilateral relationships based on the principles of territorial integrity, mutual respect, friendly relations, cooperation and non-interference in each other's internal affairs;

Underscore the key significance of the immediate neighbours of Afghanistan for promoting lasting stability and prosperity;

Reaffirm that sustainable progress on security, governance and development is mutually reinforcing;

Re-emphasize the coordinating role of the United Nations/UNAMA and reiterate the Afghan ownership over the contributions to provide as much transparency as possible in their assistance efforts;

Stress the importance of a comprehensive approach which should include regional cooperation as an indispensable part in addressing the challenges in Afghanistan and beyond;

Recall the existence of various processes aimed at contributing to enhanced cooperation and fostering regional ownership, including among others the Trilateral Summit processes among Turkey, Afghanistan, Pakistan; among Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan; among Iran, Afghanistan and Tajikistan; among Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan; among Tajikistan, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Russian Federation and among the Russian Federation, Pakistan and Afghanistan; the Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan (RECCA); the Special Conference on Afghanistan convened under the auspices of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in March 2009;

Welcome these processes that add substance and value to regional cooperation and are mutually reinforcing;

Pledge therefore to give strong emphasis and further impetus to the ongoing regional cooperation processes;

Acknowledge that terrorism poses a common challenge that could only be addressed through concerted efforts;

Aim to reinforce efforts in countering terrorism, extremism, illicit narcotics production and trafficking, illegal drugs, organized crime and trafficking in human beings;

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Commit to deeper cooperation to prevent cross-border illegal flow of weapons, production and trafficking of narcotics and precursors, and trans-national organized crime, by among other means, strengthening national capacities to address these challenges;

Emphasize the need to address the situation of refugees by creating conditions within Afghanistan conducive to the safe, voluntary, gradual and dignified return and settlement of Afghan refugees in Afghanistan with the support of the international community;

Commit to coordinating work with a view to underpinning economic and human capital development and security at the national and regional levels;

Agree to enhance region-wide connectivity through the establishment and further development of trade and transit, energy and transport corridors and to encourage participation of their private sectors in regional development programmes including through joint ventures;

Agree to give impetus to project-based cooperation in the areas of trade, energy, transport, industry, mining, agriculture, livestock and environment;

Remain ready to use our membership in various international and regional organizations and participation in various processes in fulfilment of our shared vision and principles as set out above;

Call on the international community to recognize and give strong support to our regional cooperation objectives and projects; and

Stress the central and impartial role of the UN in promoting peace and stability in Afghanistan.

As we cooperate with regard to supporting Afghanistan in its rightful quest for peace, security and prosperity, we agree on the following:

(a) Establish a Minds Platform that would bring together selected members of academia, media, and think tanks. Turkey has offered to host the first meeting of the Minds Platform in 2010;

(b) Work towards Regional Capacity Building Programmes in selected areas that would bring together senior officials of relevant national institutions with a view to promoting joint training dialogue and activities;

(c) Organize natural disaster response simulation exercises;

(d) Commission a joint expert study to foster targeted projects on job creation, and infrastructure building;

(e) Organize a joint cultural exhibition to highlight commonalities as well as cooperation among countries and peoples of the region.

We agree to meet annually and as appropriate.

We express our deep gratitude to H.E. Mr. Abdullah Gül, President of the Republic of Turkey for hosting the Regional Summit and facilitating the adoption of this Statement.